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New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations

The President: Before we proceed to the item on our agenda, it is my sad duty to pay tribute to the memory of the late Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, His Excellency Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, who passed away on Monday, 20 February 2017. I am joined for the tribute this morning by members of his bereaved family, Mrs. Irina Churkin, wife of the late Ambassador, and Mr. Maksim Churkin, their son. On behalf of the General Assembly, I would like to extend to them our heartfelt condolences. Before proceeding further, I would like to make my own tribute to the memory of the late Ambassador.

Ambassador Churkin was a dear friend and colleague, and his tragic passing — just one day shy of his sixty-fifth birthday — shocked and saddened us all. In the annals of history of the United Nations, Ambassador Churkin's name will be indelible. His decade of wise leadership while serving as the representative of the Russian Federation on the Security Council will suffice to ensure that legacy. But it will be the late Ambassador's character that will surely be the most beloved element of institutional memory of this remarkable man. The outpouring of heartfelt tributes from colleagues from all corners of the world reflects the esteem in which Ambassador Churkin was held. To put it simply, in the theatre of diplomacy, Ambassador Churkin was a giant, a deep and eloquent intellectual with a sharp wit and a disarmingly approachable manner. He served his country with passion and pride. As the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the United Nations for more than a decade, he became the longest-serving member of the Security Council. Ambassador Churkin's quick intelligence was admired by all, his grasp of the intricacies of international political affairs undisputed. His mastery of negotiation and due process commanded respect from all quarters. But it is the passing of the man himself that we mourn — the loss of his dry wit, his knowing looks, eye to eye, his smiling dismissal of nonsense, and his wide cultural reach into literature, theatre and film. For all this and so much more that Vitaly Ivanovich Churkin shared with his colleagues, we are so grateful, even as we stand diminished by his passing.

Over a long and illustrious career, Ambassador Churkin made an outstanding contribution to the work of the United Nations. And while acknowledging the myriad challenges the Organization has faced, he believed "the United Nations continues to be an indispensable mechanism". On behalf of the General Assembly, I would like to express our most sincere condolences to Mrs. Irina Churkina, to their children, Anastasia and Maksim, to the staff of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, and to the people and the Government of the Russian Federation.

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I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Excellency Ambassador Vitaly Churkin.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President: I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: It is with deep sadness that I join the General Assembly to pay tribute to our friend and colleague Vitaly Ivanovich Churkin, who was tragically and suddenly taken from us last month on the eve of his sixty-fifth birthday. Throughout his decade-long tenure as the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Ambassador Churkin was a unique and visible presence. His was an unmistakeable voice. Witty, he was also passionate in defending Russian interests while advocating for a strong United Nations. He was truly and simultaneously a patriot and an internationalist. Ambassador Churkin was truly one of a kind: an outstanding diplomat, a man, of many talents and interests and a human being whose friendship touched many of us here in the Hall today.

He constantly tried to reach out to other people, regardless of political affiliations, nationality or position. He made himself accessible to the press even at times when others dodged reporters' questions. From his beginnings as an interpreter, he went on to become one of Russia's most able diplomats and one of the United Nations community's most renowned actors, greatly respected and admired by all his colleagues.

I came to know Ambassador Churkin only recently. But even in a short time I quickly recognized his formidable diplomatic skills. I remember witnessing some of his most brilliant moments, which friends will recognize as "vintage Churkin". It was he who last October, during the Russian presidency of the Security Council, announced to the world that the Council had decided to recommend me to the General Assembly to serve as Secretary-General. That is something I will never forget.

I wish to once again express my deepest condolences to his widow, Irina, to his son, Maksim, to the rest of his family, to all his friends and colleagues in the Russian Mission in New York and in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and to the Government and the people of Russia. I trust that all colleagues at the Russian Mission in New York and in the Russian Foreign Ministry will continue to build on his legacy and support the global mission of the United Nations to safeguard peace, sustainable development and human rights for all.

In conclusion, allow me to offer a few words in probably not-very-correct Russian:

(*spoke in Russian*)

May you rest in peace, may the earth be a soft bed for you.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of Cabo Verde, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Fialho Rocha (Cabo Verde): In my capacity as the Chair of the Group of African States for the month of March 2017, I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, for convening today's formal meeting in honour of our late colleague Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, whose untimely demise shocked us all.

As has been widely said, our dear colleague Ambassador Churkin was greatly admired and represented his country with steadfast dedication as the longest-serving Permanent Representative at the Security Council. Indeed, Ambassador Churkin's colleagues, surprised by his unexpected passing, literally assaulted social networks to bear witness to their sympathy for who he was — the fine man and colleague, the friend, the able and experienced professional, the titan, the tremendous and respected diplomat, the supporter of peace and multilateralism. He was also remembered for his courage and example. Furthermore, they highlighted the emptiness left by him and his skilled action in the Security Council, while several meetings were interrupted or began with a moment of silence in his honour. At the same time, memorial books were signed and condolences were addressed to his widow and family, to his colleagues at the Mission and to the Government of Russia.

At this particular moment, in which the United Nations family is gathered to pay tribute to one of its former members, it is through my voice that the African Group reiterates its deepest sympathy to Ambassador Churkin's family and to the Government and the people

of Russia for their loss. May the soul of our departed colleague rest in peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia, who will speak on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group of States.

Mr. Mayong Onon (Malaysia): On behalf of my Permanent Representative, who is on an official trip to Geneva, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 54 States members of the Group of Asia-Pacific States, of which Malaysia is Chair for the month of March 2017.

We are gathered here today to pay tribute to Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, late Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, who left us 21 February 2017. The late Ambassador Churkin was the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation for almost 11 years, a towering figure in multilateral forums who represented Russia at the United Nations. His knowledge, experience and skills were well respected by colleagues and friends. He was a man of outstanding intellectual capability, an excellent diplomat with exceptional leadership qualities. He was also full of wisdom, from which his country benefited immensely at the United Nations over the past decade.

Ambassador Churkin's work at the United Nations was exemplary. Even on issues where positions were miles apart and consensus seemed impossible, Ambassador Churkin was known among colleagues as always wanting to engage in dialogue, which is the reflection of a genuine diplomat. He left a huge imprint and was a major driver of the United Nations contribution to the international community, especially on international peace and security issues, when he was President of the Security Council on numerous occasions.

We acknowledge the presence here today of Mrs. Irina Churkina and Mr. Maksim Churkin, and recognize Ms. Anastasia Churkina, who could not be with us today, and express our deep and heartfelt condolences to them and their entire family.

On behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, I would also extend our most sincere condolences to the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations and to the Government and the people of the Russian Federation as we join in mourning the passing of a man who devoted his life to defending his country. Indeed, he was an inspiration to all of us working at the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Moldova, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Lupan (Republic of Moldova): On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I would like to extend our deepest condolences on the passing of our colleague His Excellency Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, and to convey our sympathy to his family and colleagues, as well as to the Government of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Churkin had an outstanding career. After graduating from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations 43 years ago, he devoted his entire life to the diplomatic service, serving in various positions in the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, where he headed the Information Department at the beginning of the 1990s and later was appointed as Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. He held a number of ambassadorial posts, such as those in Belgium and Canada, and as Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Russia.

For his work in those postings, he was awarded with the Order of Honour, the Order "For Merit to the Fatherland" and the Order of Alexander Nevsky. Since 2006, Ambassador Churkin dedicated almost 11 years of his professional life to one of the most challenging posts in the diplomatic field, that of the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations. Ambassador Churkin was one of the most visible and competent advocates for his country. His strong personality gave him an opportunity to be a prominent presence in the discussions in the Security Council and in other forums addressing the wider United Nations agenda.

Mr. Churkin had a precise command of United Nations-related issues and played a leading role in promoting his country's priorities in the Organization. His rich experience was easily apparent in discussions on a variety of critical topics here at the United Nations. In an Organization of many different cultures, his statements and approaches were uncommon yet powerful. Even when his point of view was not necessarily shared by others, it was listened to with great attention. As a brilliant diplomat, Ambassador Churkin was indeed a fierce advocate for his country and an extraordinary individual with an extraordinary task. He had a unique personality with a lively spirit

and a sharp sense of humour; he was a good colleague and a loving husband.

The news of someone's death is always saddening. But when it happens to one of our colleagues, someone we worked with so closely, it is even sadder and more shocking. Being dedicated to our jobs at the United Nations means working hard, finding new ideas where there are few convergent points of view, protecting our countries' interests and often spending sleepless nights in negotiations and diplomatic debates. We face new days with hope and concern as we confront an array of challenges. And one of those uneasy beginnings to a day was, unfortunately, the last morning for our colleague Ambassador Vitaly Churkin.

Vitaly Churkin will remain in the memory of many of us present today in this Hall as a diplomat dedicated to his country's interests in this global forum, a professional who spent his time on the job until his last moments. He passed away, leaving his friends and family, only one day before his sixty-fifth birthday. They will always remember him as a loving husband and father who cared for his family with great affection. His country awarded Ambassador Churkin the Order of Courage for the service, dedication, perseverance and great professionalism he showed in his post as Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations. His Minister said that the most important thing for a diplomat is the ability to advocate for the interests of a country without falling into unbridled confrontation and while seeking possible ways to join efforts based on a balance of interests — and that the best way we can pay our respects to our friend is to continue to work on creating the basis for a calmer, safer, more democratic world. We could not agree more with that remembrance.

As we pursue peace in advancing the agenda of the United Nations, may we also follow the path that seeks consensus and understanding, and in that way show members' respect for a dedicated diplomat and strong personality who served his country's interests at the United Nations in the most unwavering way. May he rest in peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the privilege of taking the floor on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States to honour the memory of the late Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, our friend Ambassador Vitaly Ivanovich Churkin. He leaves a rich legacy on how to conduct oneself in international relations. We should not be sad at his death, because we know that his spirit is now at peace. While he was among us, he taught us, he made us reflect and he helped us to see some issues from a different point of view.

I met Vitaly 20 years ago, when we both Heads of Mission in Canada at a more peaceful time in the world, and we shared happy moments ice-skating at the home of Canada's Governor-General. In 2006, Vitaly and I found ourselves coinciding once again in this Organization, and in spite of his many responsibilities, he was always willing to give any colleague the benefit of his time and his enormous insight. This great diplomat's personality and talent certainly distinguished him far beyond his official duties; not only was he friendly and genuinely attentive to all, he was also familiar with history and the conditions that created it, knowledge that enabled him to serve his country's interests to the full. And that is why we feel so deeply the irreparable loss of a generous personality, an enlightened talent and an incomparably sardonic sense of humour.

We cannot say that we can fully comprehend the overwhelming pain that his family, his close friends and the Russian people are feeling. But we nevertheless want to offer them our comfort and affection and to voice our respect and admiration for a man who in life was a worthy representative of his country. Remembering the dedication that our friend Vitaly showed every day at every meeting and session where we were together is to recognize a masterly and distinguished diplomat. Vitaly was one of a kind, an avid listener to positions and arguments with a knowledge of the background to every debate, a tireless defender of his country's interests, an agile negotiator and, above all, a human being who was always accessible and correct in his dealings despite any differences. Vitaly embodied the essence of the conduct of modern diplomacy.

Although he has departed from us, this Organization must keep his memory intact and at this time, as with many of the vicissitudes that the United Nations has to face, we must remember his life, keeping alive the spirit and energy that characterized him so that we can strive to emulate his decisiveness and courage. On this unhappy occasion we offer our heartfelt condolences and sincere regrets to his sorrowing wife and children and to his country. His absence must become our strength,

and by our acts we must show that his presence in this Organization and in our lives was greatly valued and for which we will always give thanks and remember. Rest in peace, Vitaly Ivanovich Churkin.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): It was with great dismay and sadness that we received the news of the sudden death of the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, Vitaly Ivanovich Churkin. Ambassador Churkin was a landmark figure at the United Nations. His long tenure as Permanent Representative of Russia, his profound knowledge of complex United Nations dossiers and processes and his sharp intellect and dry wit made him an outstanding diplomat and a very effective representative of his country.

One of Ambassador Churkin's core strengths was his ability to connect with his counterparts on a personal level. However heated the debate in some formal settings might become, afterwards he always reached out to those with whom he disagreed. Vitaly Churkin never forgot there is a difference between official positions and talking points and the private person behind the statements. Diplomacy is defined and driven to a large extent by the interaction between people, and Ambassador Churkin understood and respected that idea very well.

Since 2006, when he took up his post, Ambassador Churkin's 11-year contribution has left an indelible mark on the Security Council and its work. He was a staunch, loyal defender of his country's foreign policy, and his firm and vocal stance on many of the issues negotiated by the Security Council and General Assembly was a source of admiration and, at times, of frustration to other members. In the world of diplomacy there is no greater compliment than to be respected by those with whom one disagrees. Ambassador Churkin earned this respect from everyone, regardless of policy or political differences. Members of the Western European and other States Group will remember Vitaly Churkin for his skilful diplomacy, distinctive voice on the Security Council and formidable personal charm.

We would like to convey our sincere condolences to Mrs. Irina Churkina, their children and our colleagues at the Russian mission, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow.

The sudden death of our colleague on the eve of his birthday — cutting short a life still full of plans and projects — will leave a huge gap on the Security Council, in the General Assembly and in the wider community of Permanent Representatives. May he rest in peace.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Matthew Rycroft, President of the Security Council for the month of March.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom), President of the Security Council: On behalf of the members of the Security Council, I would like to express my heartfelt condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Ambassador Vitaly Churkin. It has been exactly one month since the first Security Council meeting without Ambassador Churkin. Members of the Council are still shocked and saddened by his sudden passing. His absence is still felt by all of us around the Council table.

Ambassador Churkin was an exceptional diplomat who served his country with integrity, skill and dedication for over 40 years. Before coming to New York, he represented Russia with distinction in Washington, D.C., Brussels and Ottawa, as well as at the Foreign Ministry in Moscow. During the more than 10 years when he served as Russian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, the Security Council was often divided. It is in such a divided environment that a diplomat's skills are put to the test. Ambassador Churkin defended the Russian position with passion, intelligence and humour. He was a master of his briefings and a tough negotiator, and his knowledge of the Security Council's workings was the envy of his peers.

Vitaly was a true professional who treated his colleagues with respect and who enjoyed the respect of everyone in the Council Chamber in return. Outside the Council, all who knew him will remember his warmth, kindness and sense of humour. His death has deprived us all of a brilliant diplomat, but also of a trusted colleague and friend. May he rest in peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): On behalf of the United States as host country, I want to convey our most sincere condolences to Mrs. Irina Churkina and the Churkin family on the untimely passing of

Ambassador Vitaly Churkin. We also extend our deep sympathy to our colleagues at the Russian Mission on the loss of one of their nation's greatest diplomats.

As the Secretary-General noted, Vitaly Churkin was truly one of a kind. He was an ever-eloquent voice at the United Nations and a consummate diplomat throughout his long career. We will remember him for his brilliance, his wisdom and sharp sense of humour. Vitaly Churkin was a steadfast advocate for his country's policies and was devoted to making the personal connections that make diplomacy work. While we did not always see things the same way, Ambassador Churkin had an eye for identifying compromise and recognized the value of stronger relations between our two countries.

The United Nations community has experienced a shock and a loss, and we miss Vitaly's presence here. Russian playwright Anton Chekhov wrote that knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice. Our late colleague Vitaly Churkin always put his knowledge into practice. Again, our thoughts and prayers remain with the Churkin family, our colleagues at the Russian Mission and the people of the Russian Federation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First and foremost, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, as well as the Secretary-General, the President of the Security Council, the Chairs of the regional groups and the representatives of the host country for their sincere and heartfelt expressions of condolences to the family of the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, Vitaly Ivanovich Churkin, and to the Russian delegation at the United Nations.

From the moment of his untimely death, we have continued to receive expressions of condolences. We cannot count all of the telephone calls and messages that our colleagues have received. The book of condolences opened in connection with this tragic event at the Permanent Representation now runs to four volumes. We are deeply thankful to all of those who grieve with us and who have found a way, somehow, to convey their sympathy and pay tribute to the memory of Vitaly Ivanovich Churkin.

These days are of course most difficult for his family and loved ones. We would like to once again express our sincere condolences and sympathy to the family of Ambassador Churkin, to his wife, Irina Yevgenieva, his son, Maksim, and his daughter, Anastasia. They have lost a loving husband and a caring father. Those of us who were lucky enough to see him with his family know how he literally transformed and how a spark of joy appeared in his eyes. His family was a source of strength for him. Probably all diplomats in all countries understand how important that is. I assure his family that, in this time of tribulation, it can count on our support and assistance. We hope that the compassion of all of those who loved, respected and esteemed Vitaly Ivanovich might, in some small way, ease the pain of his irreplaceable loss.

The news of Ambassador Churkin's death shook Russia. It is difficult to remember a similar event. Thousands upon thousands of people who never knew him personally showed sincere grief over his sudden death, at work. His passing was a very difficult and irreplaceable loss for Russian foreign policy. He was a professional of the highest order who had a unique intellect and incisiveness. He also had incredible charm and a great sense of humour. He was endlessly bright, subtle and, at the same time, a surprisingly powerful person.

The achievements of Ambassador Churkin are difficult to overstate. They were celebrated with a number of high State awards. Repeatedly, he was accorded high office within the Russian Foreign Service, at times, and in its most difficult and important spheres. These were many and varied. They included Press Secretary of the Soviet Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Special Representative of the Russian President on the Balkan settlement, as an Ambassador with a special remit to develop cooperation in the Arctic, as well as important diplomatic posts in a range of countries in Europe and America. He always reached the maximum possible achievements, writing a number of important pages in the history of the Russian Federation's foreign policy. He set himself apart with his sharp wit, intelligence, deep knowledge and an unconventional view of problems. At all stages of his journey, he was a true leader and an example for all of those who had the fortune to work together with him.

The talent of Ambassador Churkin shone brightest in his last working post, as the Permanent Representative to the United Nations. The President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, noted that,

> "for more than 10 years, he firmly and consistently defended Russian interests on the most important issues on the international agenda, which required incredible effort and total dedication."

It was possible not to agree with him, but it was impossible not to pay tribute to his diplomatic talent, his professionalism and his charisma. Despite all difficulties, he solved the problems that he faced brilliantly. When answering questions on the lack of effectiveness of the United Nations, Vitaly Ivanovich repeatedly referred to the formula according to which the United Nations simply cannot be much better than the world in which we live. He genuinely strived to ensure that our world became better and saw in the United Nations a key instrument for joint work towards the achievement of that goal.

Vitaly Ivanovich will be remembered at the United Nations for many achievements and, as Mr. Guterres just mentioned, what many will probably remember are the events of October 2016, when he stood with the Permanent Representatives of the States of the Security Council and, with clear enthusiasm, announced the decision taken by the Council on the issue of the candidacy of the new Secretary-General. At that time, Russia held the presidency of the Security Council, and Vitaly Ivanovich played a particular role at a turning point in the life of the Organization. That was one of the moments of genuine unity among the members of the Council. He always advocated strengthening that unity, however difficult the process of overcoming discord might have been.

Ambassador Churkin believed in the United Nations, and this full General Assembly Hall today is the best possible demonstration of the fact that his daily tireless work to strengthen the authority and influence of the Organization around the world will be remembered for a long time, not only within these walls, which became so dear to him, but also far beyond them, and probably in each of the States Members of the United Nations, whose representatives worked with this remarkable Russian diplomat who was an exceptional person with a bright personality. May he rest in peace.

The President: I shall now suspend the meeting to allow the Secretary-General and myself to bid farewell to Ambassador Churkin's family.

The meeting was suspended at 10.55 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/71/764/Add.5)

The President: In keeping with established practice, I would like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/71/764/Add.5, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/71/764/Add.4, Vanuatu has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/71/764/Add.5?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 66 (*continued*)

Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

Commemorative meeting on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

The President: The General Assembly will now resume its consideration of agenda item 66 in order to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and to hold a debate on racial profiling and incitement to hatred, including in the context of migration, in accordance with paragraph 27 of resolution 71/181, of 19 December 2016.

I will now read out a statement on the subject of racial profiling and incitement to hatred, including in the context of migration.

We meet today, 21 March, to observe for the fiftieth time the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It is an occasion for us all to reflect on the mistakes of our past and to renew our determination to not let them be repeated. When the General Assembly first proclaimed 21 March as International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, it was under the determined leadership of South Africa to never let the injustices of apartheid be forgotten. That date was selected to memorialize the 69 unarmed people killed by police during a peaceful demonstration against apartheid-era policies in Sharpeville, South Africa.

On this occasion, on behalf of the General Assembly, I commend South Africa for its global leadership in the fight against racism. In particular, I thank Her Excellency Ms. Susan Shabangu, Minister of Women in the Presidency of South Africa, and His Excellency Mr. Guillaume Long, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador, who will address the General Assembly later today.

As we look around our world, it is challenging to us all to see just how far we are from winning the global fight against racism, xenophobia and related intolerance. Despite global migration long being a feature of human history, and in spite of the exigencies of forcible displacement having driven large numbers of people from their homes, refugees and migrants are too often being received these days in conditions of suspicion, fear and intolerance. At a time when the world needs to call on its reserves of empathy and common humanity as we respond to the largest humanitarian and refugee crisis since the Second World War, we are instead too often witnessing hate crimes against immigrant asylum-seekers, attacks against places of worship and threats directly targeting migrants and minority groups. In such circumstances, we must reaffirm our faith in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, more than 50 years after its adoption by the General Assembly, along with our commitment to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

In these challenging times, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights calls on us to stand up against racism, xenophobia and hate, wherever we encounter them. People of conscience should stand up for pluralism and cross-cultural understanding whenever the opportunity allows. Across the globe, it is incumbent upon political leaders to role-model tolerant and respectful attitudes towards migrants. We need to promote cross-cultural education in our schools to foster respect for diversity and understanding of the positive contribution refugees and migrants make to our societies and economies. Most critically of all, we need to fully support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, secure a safer, more sustainable and prosperous future for all — one which will relieve many of the root causes driving people from their homes. That includes by eliminating extreme poverty and building peaceful and inclusive societies, increasing prosperity, reducing inequality, improving access to education, combating climate change and protecting our natural environment. Finally, we must use the historic opportunity of the forthcoming negotiations on a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration to affirm universal respect for the rights of migrants.

I will conclude with a quotation from South Africa's most famous son, Nelson Mandela, who once memorably said,

> "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background or his religion. People must learn to hate, and, if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: As the President of the General Assembly just mentioned, today reminds us that in 1960 in Sharpeville, South Africa, 69 unarmed protesters were killed during a peaceful protest against discriminatory laws passed by the racist apartheid regime. I join my voice to his in praising South Africa's leadership in our common struggle against racial discrimination. Yet, as we scan the global landscape 57 years later, it seems that we are living in an increasingly intolerant and even more divided world.

Discrimination and violence are on the rise. People are targeted because of their race, nationality, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. Moreover, borders are being closed, and the international refugee regime is being undermined. In a time of upheaval and change, it is easy to paint vulnerable communities as the cause of the problems. Migrants have become convenient scapegoats, while xenophobia has become widespread. Women and girls of minority communities are often targeted. Many minorities experience racial profiling by authorities. Far too often, hate speech, stereotyping and stigmatization have become normalized. Fringe figures have moved to centre stage in many political systems.

Despite that dark picture, there are many rays of hope. Millions of people are speaking up against racism and intolerance. Many communities have opened their hearts and doors to refugees and migrants while recognizing and appreciating migration as part of the solution of our global problems.

Today marks the day to build upon that progress, do even more, work even harder, close divisions, combat intolerance and protect the human rights of all. Today

is also a reminder of all our common obligations. International law requires States to take effective actions to prevent and eliminate discrimination on all grounds and in all areas of civil, economic, political, social and cultural life. They must be vigilant and respond immediately and appropriately, including by prohibiting incitement to racial, national and religious hatred and ending racial profiling. They must uphold the integrity of the international refugee protection regime.

Politicians and leaders must speak up and counter hateful speech, and everyone of us needs to stand up for human rights. I applaud civil-society organizations around the world for reminding us that we need to do better and more. We all have a role to play. The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination highlights our collective responsibility. After all, racial discrimination destabilizes societies, undermines democracies and erodes the legitimacy of Governments.

By acting together to end discrimination, we can lift humankind as a whole. As societies become multi-ethnic, multireligious and multicultural, we need greater political, cultural and economic investments in inclusivity and cohesion in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. We can build communities that recognize that diversity is not a source of weakness. It is a source of strength and richness.

Let us therefore stand up against intolerance and eliminate discrimination. Let us join forces together in our global campaign for respect, safety and dignity for all.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Members will recall that, in resolution 71/181, the General Assembly decided that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights would participate in this commemorative meeting. I understand that, owing to his participation at a similar meeting in the framework of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, is unable to be here with us today. His statement is now being circulated desk-to-desk.

Before proceeding further, I should now like to consult members with a view to inviting the following speakers to make statements on this occasion, in accordance with paragraph 27 of resolution 71/181, and as mentioned in my letter dated 15 March: Ms. Louise Arbour, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration; Ms. Anastasia Crickley, Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; and Mr. Mutuma Ruteere, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. If there is no objection, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly, without setting a precedent, to invite those speakers to make statements at this commemorative meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with the decision just taken, I now give the floor to Ms. Louise Arbour, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration.

Ms. Arbour: It is a great honour for me to be with everyone today as I begin my mandate as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration and participate in this commemorative plenary meeting of the General Assembly to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and address the theme of racial profiling and incitement to hatred, including in the context of migration. In fact, the theme of this commemorative event could not be more timely, as the General Assembly recently adopted by consensus the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) in September 2016, and has embarked on developing a global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration that will, among other issues, look at combating racism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance towards all migrants.

With an estimated 244 million international migrants today, which is an increase from the 175 million reported in the year 2000, which is expected only to rise, the global compact can be a significant advancement not only in how we perceive and treat migrants, but also in how societies can embrace diversity. But, although the international community took that historic step at last September's summit, we are witnessing significant and widespread hostility towards migrants in many countries. Manifestations of racial discrimination and xenophobia towards migrants have unfortunately kept pace with increased human mobility Even in countries that in the past had taken pride in welcoming migrants, we hear strident voices of apprehension with regard to migrants arriving at their borders today. The reality is

that no country can claim to be free from racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia or intolerance.

When the discourse on migration policy reverts to feverish debates that demonize migrants as burdens to society or perpetuate inaccuracies, the factual and overwhelming positive contributions that migrants make to our societies and economies are overshadowed and risk being forgotten altogether. Often, those politically charged debates are accompanied by political calls to restrict or halt migration entirely, as well as heightened negativity in the media. Sometimes they can also spill into acts of violence and intimidation against minority groups. Migration debates in many parts of the world have created a climate in which it is all too easy to see migrants as directly or indirectly responsible for unemployment, security issues or the lack of social cohesion, among many other negative issues, but we know that those types of issues are rooted in much more complex processes of change. Migrants simply become the scapegoat for the very effects of those processes.

In order to address misconceptions about migration and the discriminatory xenophobic intolerant views that those misconceptions foster, we need to create a more open, balanced and comprehensive discourse on migration — one that moves away from migrants being seen as a burden or a threat towards one that recognizes and embraces human mobility and diversity as a contribution to vibrant societies and strong economies. We must work towards social inclusion to foster a two-way exchange that allows both migrants and host communities to thrive and to transform collectively.

Migrants are the bridges between countries of origin, transit and destination. They are the spark that ignites new ideas and new thinking, fosters innovation and propels societies forward rather than backward. They bring with them their entrepreneurial skills to contribute to their new countries, while also contributing to their countries of origin through their remittances, which in 2015 alone exceeded $601 billion.

As more and more people are on the move, more cultures become intertwined and societies become more diverse. As pluralistic societies are more likely to be the norm rather than the exception, one of our most important challenges is to help appreciate and manage this growing social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity. In that regard, I am especially proud to be working closely with the Secretary-General to support the "Together Campaign", which Member States also committed to supporting in the New York Declaration. The campaign starts a new dialogue about refugees and migrants, one that highlights the economic, cultural and social contributions of migrants to foster social cohesion while countering the negative stereotyping and falsehoods about migrants. I believe that one of the most important elements of the Together Campaign is that it puts the responsibility on each one of us — the United Nations, Governments, the private sector, the media, academia, civil society and migrants themselves — to play a role to encourage a discourse based on facts and a dialogue that embraces diversity. It builds from the local level up through the engagement of individuals, communities, cities and countries seeking to change the discourse and promote our common values of tolerance and respect for human dignity.

In conclusion, while we collectively work towards the development of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, let us ensure that it focuses on the ways in which we can work together to eliminate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance towards migrants. To do so, it is essential that we improve the public perception of migrants based on factual information about the positive contributions of migrants.

As I embark upon my new role, I wholeheartedly embrace and pledge to advance our collective efforts to shift the narrative and to promote a global community where migrants and all people are free from discrimination.

The President: In accordance with the decision just taken, I now give the floor to Ms. Anastasia Crickley, Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Ms. Crickley: First, let me, on behalf of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), thank the General Assembly for the honour and opportunity to be here with delegations to share my thoughts on this historic day.

The horrific events of 21 March 1960, known as the Sharpeville massacre, sparked outrage worldwide and became the turning point in the fight against apartheid. It is now, as we know, commemorated around the world as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Five years later, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

was adopted at Headquarters by the General Assembly. Today, more than 50 years since then, we can acknowledge that progress has been made to end racism and its consequences for women, men and children globally. On behalf of the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, I wish to acknowledge the commitments by States and the work by people everywhere that created the conditions that made that progress possible. I also applaud the continued courage and courageous efforts of civil society globally to ensure that that progress continues.

However, as the Committee's work indicates, racial discrimination remains a very current concern in every country of the world. Legacies of early forms of racism and slavery and colonialism remain intact and evident in discrimination against people of African descent, indigenous peoples and a number of other groups globally. Racial discrimination, whether by intent or in effect — either or both can apply — and as the definition the Assembly wisely adopted in article 1 of the Convention states, remains an insidious phenomenon visible not least in racial profiling and the incitement to hatred. These are frequently targeted at migrants and refugees, but let us be clear at the outset that whoever they target, racial profiling is, and can easily be shown to be, an expensive and ineffective attempt at justice or the protection of national security, and incitement oftentimes dehumanizes our fellow human beings in ways that have had dreadful and well documented consequences for whole populations and peoples.

Again, as is well researched and documented, let us remember also to paraphrase the Committee's statement for the United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants, which took place on 19 September 2016 at Headquarters, migrants and refugees make positive and essential contributions to societies and communities, and the adoption of measures based on principles of non-discrimination, equality and justice are essential in creating stable and peaceful societies that will reap positive results for humankind as a whole.

However, in the shadow of persistent efforts to stigmatize and divide, often repeated carelessly by leaders in multimedia formats in their own short-term interests, the Assembly's focus today on racial profiling and incitement, including in the context of migration, is an important recognition of these great instances of discrimination, including at institutional levels. CERD shares the Assembly's concern and the current urgency to articulate and address them.

Racial profiling and incitement to hatred are addressed in virtually all of CERD's concluding observations to States under review. Those observations are grounded in the Convention, which by now 178 countries have ratified and agreed to implement its provisions, and they are informed by the Committee's general recommendations, which articulate and explain them. In effect, the international community already has at its disposal, through those and other human rights provisions, at both the global and regional levels, guidance and pointers on identifying, addressing and eliminating profiling and incitement.

For example, racial profiling is a particular focus of the Committee's general recommendation No. 31, on the prevention of racial discrimination in the administration and functioning of the criminal justice system. Additionally, general recommendation No. 30, on discrimination against non-citizens, calls on States to ensure that counter-terrorism measures do not discriminate in purpose or effect. They are recommended to take resolute action to counter any tendency to target, stigmatize, stereotype or profile on the basis of race, colour, descent and national or ethnic origin members of non-citizen population groups, especially by politicians, officials, educators, the media or on the Internet and other electronic forms of communication networks and in society at large.

We also point to the need for action on measures, not just in national policy and legislation, but at all levels and addressed to all elements in the State administration. Those concerns are echoed by the Human Rights Committee, and they form an important part of the work of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and are evident in his recommendations. My colleague will, of course, address the Assembly later.

Turning now to incitement, hatred and racist hate speech, the Committee's general recommendation No. 35 takes into consideration article 4 of the Convention, which obliges States to take immediate and positive measures to eradicate incitement and racial discrimination. CERD is clear, and states this in its recommendation that the criminalization of racist expression be reserved for the most serious of cases and should take into account, for example, the content and form of the speech, the economic, social and cultural climate, the status of the speaker, as well as the reach and objectives of the speech. Addressing the root causes

of racist hate speech requires a number of initiatives, including in the education, cultural and information arenas. I would also add that it requires clear leadership from those whose positions call for it, not to mention a little of the courage of those I have mentioned and who have struggled against racism in so many countries over the years.

The context of migration — as the previous speaker pointed out — is a current and very complex one within which to address the issues of racism in every country, whether we describe those countries as sending, transit or, in particular, so-called destination countries. These challenges are also addressed in the Committee's concluding observations. We call on countries that have not done so to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and other relevant commitments, including those of the International Labour Organization.

In the New York Declaration, which was already mentioned, Member States made a wealth of commendable and concrete commitments to human rights issues related to migration, including to protect the rights of all refugees and migrants as rights-holders, regardless of their status. In a statement that was also reflective of the concerns of other treaty bodies and human rights mechanisms, CERD appealed to Member States and intergovernmental organizations to ensure that solutions aimed at addressing large movements of refugees and migrants be grounded in, and guided by, existing international human rights norms and standards, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and that they be informed by the principles and guidance developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. This human rights framework, which already forms part of the commitments made by States here, is very important for the success of the compact now being developed. It is a necessary prerequisite for addressing all human rights matters, including racism in the migration field. In that regard, I acknowledge the upcoming human rights consultation by the co-facilitators of the compact, which includes a focus on racism, xenophobia and intolerance.

The pernicious institutionalized issues we address and discuss today will not be conclusively addressed by a simple one-size-fits-all approach. For example, as the work of CERD indicates, women who experience racial discrimination experience a gendered form of this human rights denial, encompassing an intersectionality between the oppression of women and racism. This is no less true for racial profiling and racial hatred towards women in the context of migration, as the important work undertaken by UN-Women and others demonstrates. How are women's human rights to be considered at each stage of the migration process, and what about appropriate services and measures to address sexual and gender-based violence and women's rights?

Children's rights to freedom from racism also need a particular and specific treatment and focus. Simple division into the categories of the deserving and undeserving, reminiscent of nineteenth-century ideals, will not work either. All women, men and children in today's mixed and changing movements of migrants deserve our consideration. The dominant public discourse on migrants, which relies on myths and prejudice, ignores both rights and realities. Few, if any, make their journeys lightly. The vast majority make them out of a real fear for their lives if they were to stay, or for potential economic possibilities — as indeed did many people from my own country in centuries past. Most people who move stay within their own country or within their own region. Also, as the example of my own country illustrates, notions of sending and hosting countries change — sometimes rapidly — over time.

In conclusion, as I have tried to outline, we have tools and guidance to address racism, including racial profiling and incitement to hatred, including in the context of migration. In spite of the major global challenges now to be faced, we can point to progress that has been made in the past half-century. To move forward, we need to recognize that sidestepping or denying racism individually or institutionally, which those in whose honour this day is named refuse to do, cannot lead to its elimination — and nor will a refusal to acknowledge its complexities and intersectionality with other forms of oppression. Xenophobic explanations that justify our fears against their rights ignore the reality articulated in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action: that xenophobia is one of the main contributors to current racism, in particular against migrants.

Taking action also requires us to know what we are talking about. Knowing what we are talking about requires us to collect data in disaggregated ways so that we can understand and address who has been affected

by the issue, how they are affected and in what way they are affected.

Moving forward successfully is possible only with the full engagement and active participation of those targeted by racial discrimination. As we women know, "nothing about us without us" is not an automatic guarantee of success; however, it is an essential ingredient in any fight for equality. Moving forward must also mean we move forward together, an idea that was captured well in the title of the Secretary-General's "Together Campaign". That requires working towards eliminating the barriers, in particular those discussed today, that obstruct togetherness at all levels. At the same time as the campaign does, we need to celebrate the achievements of individual towns, cities, communities and groups that demonstrate their human capacity to work towards a future that can be described as "together for all".

Moving forward is possible as long as we continue to believe, as did Nelson Mandela — whom the President quoted earlier — that nobody is born to hate. People learn to hate, and so can learn to love.

I thank the Assembly and wish it good luck in leading us forward.

The President: In accordance with the decision just taken, I now give the floor to Mr. Mutuma Ruteere, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Mr. Ruteere: It is an honour to have been invited to speak today before the plenary of the General Assembly on the occasion of the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, specifically the theme of racial profiling and incitement to hatred. I thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this timely event, and Member States for the invitation to address the Assembly. I would also like to warmly congratulate Ms. Louise Arbour on her appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Migration. I look forward to working together with her on these issues.

It is not by chance that the first global human rights treaty adopted by the United Nations was the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Racism and racial discrimination took centre stage in many of the major crises of the twentieth century. The turn of the century represented the hope that we had left behind the brutalities of the twentieth century, with its wars, repressive Governments and institutionalized discrimination, and that the new ideas of human rights and cosmopolitanism, within and beyond borders, would make the twenty-first century a more humane and kinder place. The optimism of those who believed that we are entering a new period has not been displaced completely, for today we are heirs to a global consensus on values of human rights, and in particular on the avoidance of discrimination on the basis of race, colour and ethnic origin.

In the second decade of the 2000s, we now also know more about one another than at any other period in history. Television, the Internet and air travel have all erased the physical barriers that previously isolated and confined humankind to their localities and regions. In spite of all this progress, however, intolerance, prejudice and discrimination continue to haunt the globe, and the limits of the values of human rights are tested every day, particularly with regard to migration and the treatment of those who cross borders in search of a better life or safety. It is therefore fitting that last year 193 States Members of the United Nations adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1) and rededicated themselves to ensuring that human rights are integral to any measures designed to address and regulate migration and population movements.

Since 2011, as Special Rapporteur, I have followed and studied the phenomena of racism and racial discrimination all over the world and regularly cautioned that, whereas progress has been made in addressing some of the more open and blatant forms of racial, ethnic and xenophobic discrimination, the problem persists and, in some cases, has worsened. In particular, the encounters between migrants and law-enforcement agencies in various parts of the world have severely shaken the foundations, and threatened the integrity of, the international system of human rights law.

In my thematic report to the Human Rights Council in June 2015, I addressed the issue of racial and ethnic profiling in law enforcement, which is widespread in many parts of the world. Racial and ethnic profiling in law enforcement is fundamentally discriminatory in nature and exacerbates violations already suffered on account of ethnic origin or minority status. For many migrants, racial profiling has meant inordinate and unjustifiable stop-and-frisk or stop-and-check

measures by law enforcement without objective or justifiable reason. In some cases, such stops have resulted in prolonged, unfair and illegal detention, unjust prosecution and, in some cases, violence.

Official border crossings and transportation hubs — such as airports, railway stations and bus depots — are common places where racial and ethnic profiling take place. At these locations, customs, border and security agencies have subjected individuals to additional security checks and interviews solely based on their national origin, religion, race or membership in a minority group. New technologies used to create risk profiles for specific ethnic groups raise the possibility that racial and ethnic profiling may become a regularized and permanent fixture of immigration and border-control management systems around the world.

In addressing the issue of profiling, it is important to underline the value of legislative measures that comprehensively prohibit racial and ethnic discrimination and the need for clear and enforceable regulations that provide guidance to law-enforcement agencies. Furthermore, investigative oversight bodies should have the authority to address allegations of racial and ethnic profiling and make practical recommendations for policy changes. These bodies should be able to conduct self-initiated investigations, as such measures are fundamental to identifying discrimination and profiling by law-enforcement agencies.

The problem of profiling — and, indeed, the problem of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia — persists partly due to the invisibility of the victims and the lack of data, statistics and research on the nature and extent of the problem. The collection of law-enforcement data disaggregated by ethnicity, race, gender and other relevant categories is a prerequisite if we are to identify the patterns of discrimination and map existing gaps, increase the visibility of discriminated groups and enable their recognition, which, in some cases, is otherwise denied. Data is also crucial for evaluating the impact of existing measures and developing adequately informed policies to redress the situation of vulnerable groups. It is fitting that the Sustainable Development Goals have stressed the role of collection and use of disaggregated data in development and in addressing the contemporary problems of discrimination and exclusion.

Migration, coupled with fears over terrorism and the pressures of struggling economies, has given fresh wind to racist and xenophobic movements that seek to exploit and turn fears over the future into the fear of migrants and strangers. Unfortunately, these movements and groups, previously confined to the fringes of politics, have in some places found their way into the mainstream of political life. Such movements and their leaders provide the rhetorical and political justification for practices such as racial profiling.

In conclusion, it is important on this occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to reiterate that human rights values remind us that the stranger is no less deserving of the freedom and equality we all cherish. The justice at the core of human rights norms and laws is not restricted to those that belong to our familial or confessional, national, racial or ethnic community. Rather, human rights speak to a notion of justice that treats the stranger as it does those we love and share kinship with. It is not surprising therefore that all major religions remind us that in the stranger is the face of God.

I look forward to working with Member States to enhance the development of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, and in particular to ensure that we collectively address the challenges of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia through the compact. I also look forward to working with Member States, the Secretary-General and other experts on the "Together Campaign" to promote diversity, respect and inclusion for all.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cabo Verde, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Fialho Rocha (Cabo Verde): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States.

The Group thanks the President of the General Assembly for convening this commemorative plenary meeting today to celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, under the theme "Racial profiling and incitement to hatred, including in the context of migration". Indeed, by this Day and its celebration, we affirm and renew our deep and global political will to fully and effectively implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the outcomes of the 2009 Durban Review Conference. Adopted at the 2001 World Conference

against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa, the Programme of Action remains the most comprehensive action-oriented global framework to combat racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, including in the troubled contexts that characterize today's migration.

The Group welcomes the progress made at the national, regional and international levels in conformity with the obligations and commitments of Durban to effectively combat racism and racial discrimination, protect the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers as well as racial, national, ethnic and linguistic minorities, and to combat incitement to hatred based on religion, belief or colour. We recognize that colonialism, apartheid and political, social or cultural aversion against human diversity have led to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and that, even today, large groups of people continue to be victims of this scourge and its consequences. Furthermore, the persistence of these structures and practices today is and remains among the factors contributing to lasting social and economic inequalities and discrimination in many parts of the world.

The African Group reaffirms its appreciation to the General Assembly for launching in 2015 the International Decade for People of African Descent, under the theme "People of African Descent: recognition, justice and development", whose main objective is to promote respect, protection and the fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of people of African descent. We are of the view that Governments should reinforce protections against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance by ensuring that everyone has access to effective and adequate redress and enjoys the right to seek just and adequate reparation and satisfaction from the competent natural tribunals or institutions for any damage resulting from such discrimination.

We have witnessed the discriminatory hardships that people of African descent face all over the world, and the way in which the international community addresses those hardships by advocating action aimed at promoting their full enjoyment of their economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, as well as respect for their diverse heritage and cultures. With the diaspora being Africa's sixth region, the African Union continues to take every opportunity to create bridges across it. The Group of African States recognizes the positive contribution that the exercise of the right to free expression through the media and other, newer information technologies, including the Internet, and full respect for the freedom to seek, receive and impart information, can make to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. At the same time, we are concerned about the use of the new information technologies, including the Internet, for purposes that run counter to respect for human rights values. We believe that Internet providers should develop and abide by codes of conduct that help to prevent trafficking and protect its victims, while strengthening measures to prevent the trafficking of women and girls, provide for their care and rehabilitation and address issues related to international displacement.

The African Group believes that a quality education for all citizens helps to create more inclusive societies and more harmonious relations among nations and individuals, and fosters mutual understanding and respect for cultural diversity and human rights for all. The Group reiterates the importance of requiring justice for victims of human rights violations that result from racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. In the light of their vulnerabilities, they should be assured of access to justice and effective, appropriate protections and remedies.

In conclusion, the African Group condemns every kind of discrimination in any circumstances, including discrimination against displaced persons in the context of migration or against asylum-seekers. We affirm our commitment to the full, speedy and effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action with a view to sustaining the momentum and gains achieved at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. We should convene a second conference to help build synergies between the progress that has been made and new partnerships in implementing the Durban targets and indicators. It is time to act, and we must do it now if we truly want to achieve meaningful, positive change in dealing with this scourge.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Mr. Rosdi (Malaysia): On behalf of my Permanent Representative, who is on an official visit to Geneva, I have the honour to speak for the States members of the

Group of Asia-Pacific States in Malaysia's capacity as the Group's Chair for the month of March.

At the outset, we would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening today's special meeting to commemorate this important date, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The theme of this year's observance of the International Day is racial profiling and incitement to hatred, including in the context of migration. The theme is apt, appropriate and timely, and we are therefore very grateful to Ms. Louise Arbour, Ms. Anastasia Crickley and Mr. Mutuma Ruteere for sharing their knowledge and experience on the issue, along with their forward-looking recommendations, which speak volumes for the importance of their presence here today in commemorating this occasion.

The countries of our region are multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual societies. At the same time, they are experiencing increases in movements of people with varying reasons for their growing levels of migration — including having to flee brutal conflicts — similar to other migrations that we are witnessing all over the world today. The Governments and administrations of receiving countries are dealing with significant challenges in trying to overcome obstacles to the inclusion and integration of migrants into their societies, including in the areas of education, health, dignity, cultural values and economic and social development. But those are not the only challenges, for social discontent, isolated or otherwise, has in some instances led to racial profiling and incitement to hatred. Such worrying situations demand positive decisions and action, as well as the necessary political will and means to ensure that the struggle to combat racism and eliminate racial discrimination can succeed. Laws and social practices that are racially discriminatory should be phased out or abolished altogether. We must mobilize our collective will, at the national, regional and international levels, together with the requisite support of all the relevant stakeholders in the private sector and civil-society organizations, to address such social discontent and eliminate incitement to hatred based on unwarranted racial profiling.

We also have the responsibility to ensure adherence to the relevant international human rights instruments, and their full and effective implementation, if we are to address the scourge of racism and racial discrimination. It is clear to us that the core international human rights instruments place obligations on States to work positively to eradicate discrimination in the public and private arenas. Related to that, the principle of equality also obliges States to adopt specific measures that serve to eliminate the conditions that sustain or contribute to the prevalence of racial discrimination. That premise is one of the foundations of this International Day. Together, we have agreed that we must fight such prejudice with the greatest possible determination and perseverance, since it continues to tarnish our humanity. The struggle against racial discrimination is a fight for human rights and dignity. Today is a sobering reminder to us all that despite the progress we have achieved so far, we are still a long way from eliminating this scourge, and that racism, xenophobia and intolerance remain in all our societies. At the same time, we are also reminded today that there is something we can all do — that each and every one of us can and must play a role at a personal level in breaking down racial prejudice and intolerant attitudes. We must find ways to reach out to society and address social discontent, as well as to educate young people in understanding, celebrating and enjoying the world's diversity.

Lastly, on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, I would once again like to declare and reiterate our strong commitment and unwavering determination to make sure that the struggle to eliminate racial discrimination remains a high priority in our countries and throughout the world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Moldova, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Lupan (Republic of Moldova): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States on the occasion of the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

After decades of continued efforts at the international, regional and national levels, racism and xenophobia continue to affect a significant number of people. The economic crisis that the international community has experienced in recent years, rising unemployment and the unprecedented movement of refugees and migrants have increased the incidence of racist behaviour, hate crimes and malicious expressions of hate and racist sentiments. Those negative manifestations go against the fundamental principles of the equality of all human beings and are a violation of human rights.

Sixteen years ago, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, adopted the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. They remain valid leading directives for international, regional and national actions against racism. The promotion of tolerance, mutual respect of cultures, traditions and faiths are important elements in achieving a world free of racism. While all Eastern European countries are party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, in a world of globalization we should continue to pool together our efforts in order to further ensure respect for human rights, as well as the safe and sustainable development of all of our countries.

Focusing on the implementation of international commitments arising from the United Nations human rights treaties is key in our continuous work towards creating a world free of racism and discrimination. Concurrently, cooperation with treaty-monitoring bodies is essential to promoting multilateral dialogue in the area of human rights, and in developing international institutional mechanisms to cooperatively address those challenges. The United Nations normative framework provides an invaluable source of legal standards with the centrality of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which represents the backbone of our national, regional and international efforts towards fighting that scourge.

This symbolic day reminds us that we should recommit to enhancing our efforts against the scourge of human suffering, so that no one is left behind in our efforts to build peaceful, secure and sustainable societies.

Mr. Mnatsakanyan (Armenia), Vice-President, too the Chair.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC).

Allow me to first express my deep appreciation to the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Thomson, for convening this plenary meeting in commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. We also welcome Ms. Louise Arbour, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration; Ms. Anastasia Crickley, Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; and Mr. Mutuma Ruteere, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Their participation here is another show of the commitment of the General Assembly to tackling the many challenges that lie ahead.

Fifty-two years ago, the General Assembly adopted resolution 2106 (XX), establishing the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, one of the oldest human rights conventions. The Convention resolved:

> "to adopt all necessary measures for speedily eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and manifestations, and to prevent and combat racist doctrines and practices in order to promote understanding between races and to build an international community free from all forms of racial segregation and racial discrimination".

Although humankind has made progress on several fronts, and has reached several milestones on commitments that we, as Member States, have set for ourselves in order to successfully meet the objective of the Convention, much remains to be done if we are to completely eliminate the discrimination and oppression from our daily lives.

Many of the countries in our region are comprised of multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual populations. Our societies benefit from the richness of the diversity of our peoples, and we therefore recognize that promoting the full participation and effective contribution of our citizens is vital for achieving just, inclusive and balanced societies — which is the only path to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In that sense, the countries of our region are convinced that sustainable development is unachievable unless everyone is included, regardless of racial, linguistic or cultural differences.

Nevertheless, in recent years, the world has witnessed an unprecedented increase in racial actions and insults over cultural, religious or ethnic differences — behaviour fuelled by hatred, ignorance and a lack of empathy and understanding — all of them exacerbated by hatred.

GRULAC reiterates its firm determination to promote the full inclusion of all people in their societies, regardless of race, origin, ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, gender or age. We strive to achieve a region and a world free of racial discrimination, as well as ensuring viable and cohesive societies for future generations. It is unacceptable that in this millennium, the human rights and dignity of many people are not protected owing to hatred, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We therefore urge all Member States to reject hatred and to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies that are free from fear and violence. Of course, the antidote to all those opprobrious practices is tolerance of, and respect for, beliefs or practices that are different from or contrary to one's own, as long as they are objectively morally acceptable.

The construction of walls between countries is a clear expression of racial and ethnic discrimination and rejection. The countries of our region make up an ethnic and racial mosaic of the immigrant men and women from all over the world. The diversity of our peoples is an asset, which is why we are greatly concerned that political campaigns are predicated on discrimination and racism. Migrant families are frequently targeted by measures that violate their fundamental human rights, their unity and integrity — all justified by reference to unrelated security concerns. Make no mistake: behind that rhetoric lies racism and xenophobia. As a result, our region remains firmly committed to critical initiatives and processes, such as intergovernmental negotiations for the process of adopting a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

It is time to confront the violence, inequalities and repression suffered by our peoples and to work in a unified way to achieve sustainable development in all of its dimensions, especially for those who are exploited, unprotected and disadvantaged — the most vulnerable — to ensure that they are treated with dignity and solidarity.

It is worth noting what Shakespeare wrote with absolute clarity in his work *The Merchant of Venice*:

> "[Have we] not eyes? [Have we] not hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer [...]? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?"

If we are like all the others, then we are all alike.

In summary, GRULAC will continue to support and spearhead collective action at the United Nations to implement the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, which clearly strives to

> "reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, [and] to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom [in order] to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours."

Ms. Young (Belize), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Our gathering today serves as an important reminder that, more than 50 years after the adoption of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, many people still suffer from racial discrimination in their daily lives. We continue to see unacceptable violence directed at people because of their race, skin colour or ethnic origin. Racial discrimination is a global scourge and no country or region is free of it. Although we have made undeniable progress and taken many concrete steps at the national and international levels, many challenges remain.

With regard to this year's theme, I would like to underline that the use of racial profiling on the basis of ethnic, racial or religious affiliation, or on any other grounds, is prohibited under several international human rights instruments. It is important for States to take active measures and enact the relevant legislation prohibiting the use of such profiling. As recommended by Special Rapporteur Mutuma Ruteere, States should provide clear instructions and practical training to law-enforcement agencies and ensure effective monitoring.

In the fight against racial profiling, we can build on a comprehensive international legal framework, the heart of which is the almost universally ratified International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Convention's treaty body — the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination — plays an essential role in ensuring respect for the Convention by monitoring its implementation and by assisting States in developing policies to combat racial discrimination. It remains important that States take active measures to fully implement their obligations under the Convention.

At the same time, we note other initiatives aimed at combating racism in all its forms, such as the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action of 2001. We recognize the importance of prevention and concerted action, especially in the field of education, and that a focus on practical and concrete measures can contribute to the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. When we fight racial discrimination, we should also work with a very active civil-society network that closely monitors and alerts us whenever it detects instances of racial discrimination or hatred.

Unfortunately, the general trend we observe today is that discrimination is on the rise. We still see many forms of discrimination, for example on the basis of race, beliefs or convictions. Let us remain vigilant and act against all forms of discrimination, including against migrants and refugees, as we pledged to do in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1). We must speak out for diversity and pluralism if we want to ensure dignity. Human rights are universal by definition and apply to all of us equally. Inclusive societies recognize and respect diversity as a source of strength. They cherish diversity as an asset for the advancement and welfare of humankind.

Mr. Long (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Today we celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and recall the tragedy that occurred on 21 March 1960, better known as the Sharpeville massacre. On that day, the South African police killed 69 protesters who were holding peaceful demonstrations against the racist and segregationist apartheid regime.

Since the end of the Second World War, the United Nations has endorsed various universally valid legal instruments. Through them, the international community has pledged not to discriminate against anyone on the basis of, inter alia, race, colour, gender, language, politics, religion, nationality, social origin or property ownership. As a species, we have also recognized that freedom, dignity and equal rights are inherent to humankind and, as such, they cannot be violated; and yet they are very often breached. Individuals, States and corporations continue to discriminate against individuals.

Human rights cannot be trampled on in the name of State sovereignty, an advance in doctrine afforded by the Nuremberg Trials. Respect for such rights is a principle that must prevail over internal electoral tensions. It includes people in extremely vulnerable situations who migrate and/or seek refuge. Humankind does not need high walls, but rather longer bridges. If we remove the causes of war and abject poverty, which would require fairer international relations and sufficient financing for development, forced human displacement would be a thing of the past.

The global migration crisis requires solidarity and international policies to promote peace and socioeconomic prosperity. Ecuador's Constitution is advanced in the area of migration. It recognizes the principles of universal citizenship and the free movement of people. We seek to be consistent, protecting our own migrants throughout the world but also welcoming the citizens of the world who wish to live in and enrich our country with their cultural diversity. Foreigners who have lived in our country for more than five years have the right to vote and can serve as public officials. We have hosted 60,000 refugees, mostly brothers and sisters who have fled the Colombian conflict, the end of which we welcome, celebrate and actively support.

Many of our fellow countrymen and women were forced out of Ecuador at the end of the last century and at the beginning of the current one by a financial and economic crisis caused by irresponsible and unscrupulous bankers who controlled the various Governments that assumed power. That plutocratic regime was responsible for the incestuous relationship that existed between financial power and political power, which prevented political decisions from being taken for the common good.

In the past decade, the Government of President Correa has restored dignity and provided support to Ecuadorians living in other countries. Through our embassies and consulates, the Ecuadorian Government

has provided legal and psychological assistance to Ecuadorians affected by the mortgage crisis in Spain and to distressed mothers and fathers who lost custody of their children in Italy. From 2010 until February this year, our Government has supported 158,000 Ecuadorians who found themselves in vulnerable situations abroad. Moreover, we have designed fiscal and credit policies to promote the economic reintegration of those Ecuadorians who have decided to return to their country. Today many migrants are returning to Ecuador, their country, which welcomes them with open arms.

More than half a century has elapsed since that sad day of 21 March 1960. Despite our expectations following the end of South African apartheid and other segregationist regimes, we are currently witnessing a resurgence of xenophobic views and racist policies that must be of concern to us all and receive a firm and unanimous response from the countries of the world.

Ecuador has the honour of chairing the Group of 77. With its experience in the area of the free movement of people, which is an initiative that requires cooperation among countries, our Government renews its determination to strengthening the doctrine of human rights from a structural, integral and indivisible perspective that will be a doctrine steeped in the struggle — the common cause of all — to eradicate racial discrimination.

Ms. Shabangu (South Africa): South Africa welcomes the convening of this commemorative event to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Today, 21 March, is also a very significant day in South Africa, on which we celebrate Human Rights Day, marking a date in our history, in 1960, when 69 people died at the hands of the brutal apartheid regime and an additional 180 were wounded in Sharpeville while protesting former oppressive laws and fighting to proclaim the recognition of their human dignity and equality and their basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Although South Africa recognizes the importance of addressing the contemporary manifestations of all the scourges of racism, some of which have taken violent forms — the essence of today's commemoration, which primarily concerns the historical injustices of racism and the related legacies of slavery — the slave trade, the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism and apartheid must not be forgotten. The outcome of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban in 2001, namely, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, is very emphatic that the legacies of historical injustices must be expiated.

The agenda item under which today's event is being held, namely, racial profiling, incitement to hatred, including in the context of migration, could not be more timely given the current migration crisis that the world is facing. Now more than ever, the posturing and rhetoric concerning the elimination of the scourges of racism must stop. The community must jointly and severally face the everyday realities presented by the challenges of migration, including the ongoing incitement to hatred towards migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers. Regrettably, at the global level, we are witnessing a growing display of anti-migrant sentiments and the infringement of their human dignity. State-sponsored xenophobia should not be tolerated. That is unacceptable and must be addressed by the international community.

South Africa is no exception to experiencing the challenges that accompany building an inclusive, equal and tolerant society for all its members, to be free from want and fear, while at the same time addressing historical injustices and past socioeconomic disparities, thereby ensuring a unified country. South Africa's constitutional democracy is predicated on the fundamental principle of non-discrimination. We continue to develop and elaborate national legislation and policies aimed at ensuring respect for the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms with zero tolerance for impunity for violations, including those grounded in xenophobia towards migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers. We urge all those who have the courage and requisite political will to combat all the scourges of racism and optimally utilize the Durban Programme of Action. That is the only instructive outcome of the United Nations World Conference against Racism, with all the essential ingredients, wich prescribe concrete measures and remedies for the elimination of all those unwanted and repudiated scourges.

Migrants may face multiple forms of discrimination, which are too often informed by negative stereotypes, stigmatization, perceptions and attitudes, including on religion and belief. Such racial profiling leads to discriminatory policies, practices and behaviours, very often resulting in the systematic violation of their rights. The international community has an obligation

to ensure that all people, including migrants, regardless of their immigration status, are at all times treated in a dignified manner and on an anti-discriminatory basis according to which their human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected, promoted, protected and realized.

Today, we find ourselves in a world in which globalization and technology have led to increased platforms and opportunities for exercising the right to freedom of opinion and expression, at times at the expense of the rights of others. That right is not without responsibility and cannot be limitless. The worrying growing trend of incitement to hatred and violence perpetrated and propagated through social media and other platforms, in particular those targeted at migrants and refugees, calls for, inter alia, the imperative need to elaborate legislation that criminalizes such hideous acts, which infringe on the human dignity of others and result only in a divisive society. It is for that reason that South Africa is leading a process within the Human Rights Council to elaborate additional protocols to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, covering xenophobia and incitement to hatred, among others.

South Africa reiterates its unwavering commitment to the eradication of all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related tolerance, and urges the international community to take all the necessary measures nationally, regionally and globally to eradicate discrimination in all its forms, including in the context of migration. Only then will we be able to benefit from a world that is truly inclusive, tolerant and respectful of diversity and human dignity for all.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): The unprecedented increase in racial discrimination, xenophobia and Islamophobia in many parts of the world is a matter of absolute concern. We in particular deplore the racist language and policies widely used by some political parties and politicians who are fanning Islamophobia and anti-migrant rhetoric to manipulate public opinion. A close look at some recent general elections serves to underline how anti-immigration and xenophobic narratives, in particular Islamophobic ones, are exploited for targeting the very values and principles of democracy. The fact that currently many inflammatory remarks are made against refugees demonstrates the unprecedented level to which the political discourse is tainted with racism and xenophobia, and in particular Islamophobia.

The executive order known as the "travel ban", which has spurred widespread opposition among public opinion and civil rights groups, is an example of the flagrant violation of many norms and instruments of international law and international human rights law, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, as it discriminates based on nationality and religion. It is also in violation of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

The responsibility of the United Nations and its Member States in the face of this gloomy situation cannot be overemphasized. What followed in the release in recent weeks by a United Nations body of a report on the heinous actions of the apartheid regime of Israel is disheartening and shows how high the price of the truth may be. The report reflects reality — and if it looks discomforting, we should do something about it. Otherwise, we would be surprised if world public opinion continued to see the United Nations as a reliable and trustworthy partner in tackling such serious issues as racism and apartheid.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, along with CERD, should continue to constitute the road map for combating all forms of racism and intolerance.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the President for organizing this meeting to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which was adopted 50 years ago, is an essential instrument in the fight against discrimination. Unfortunately, it remains all too relevant today.

France is working within international bodies and attempting to ensure that hate speech and discrimination, including towards migrants, are condemned, and it is doing everything it can to prevent those things from happening.

In France, the freedom of expression is an inalienable right. It is enshrined in our Constitution. Like any freedom, it is not absolute. Nobody is free to commit a crime or an infraction without being punished, in particular with regard to racist or anti-Semitic language or acts. In France, racism is a crime, like any other form of discrimination, on the basis of real or imagined origin

or for belonging or not belonging to an ethnic group, a nation, a race or a faith, in particular religion. Racism is never an opinion that can be freely expressed.

In its fight against intolerance, France does not privilege any particular kind of discrimination over another. Be they anti-Semitic, anti-Islam, anti-Christian, anti-Roma or homophobic, all acts of intolerance and discrimination are vigorously condemned by public authorities and are subject to legal prosecution.

The fight against racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia is one of France's human rights priorities. This fight is also being carried out by the highest bodies in the country as a national cause following the events of January 2015. France adopted its second national action plan against racism and anti-Semitism for 2015-2017, which includes powerful measures.

More than ever before, we must all work together to ensure that the principles that we uphold in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination are fully implemented.

Mrs. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The full implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action remains a pending issue in the fight for equal rights among all human beings. We view with concern that, in many countries and regions of the world, racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia continue to emerge, including in new and more sophisticated forms. This is reflected in the appearance of associations and political parties with racist platforms; the persistence of, and increase in, social exclusion and the marginalization of peoples, ethnic groups, minorities and other categories of social groups or peoples; the negative impact of racial profiling in the elaboration and implementation of policies; the proliferation of discriminatory migration policies and laws; and the adoption of anti-terrorist laws that open the door to arbitrariness and public action taken on a discriminatory, racist and xenophobic basis.

It is high time that an end be put to discrimination against races, ethnic groups, nations and entire communities. Racial hatred and violence against a group of people because of their origin, race or beliefs should be combated and eliminated. We must adopt effective measures to respond to the root causes of these problems and to address the circumstances that empower them. We must establish an express prohibition of the use of racial and ethnic profiling by bodies that are responsible for enforcing the law.

It is increasingly urgent to place greater emphasis on the treatment of this subject in the manifestations and on the potential impact both by States and by the United Nations bodies that deal with these questions or others related to it. This could help promote efforts to give this issue the priority it deserves on the political agendas of the countries that are most affected.

We share the view expressed in this Hall that the discussions aimed at a global compact to address the issue of migrants provides an opportunity that should be taken advantage of by all States in order to focus on the challenges that we must address in combating racial discrimination and to create policies that make it possible to move forward towards finding solutions to the problems identified and to establish international cooperation for a world in which equality, mutual respect and social justice prevail.

We also wish to express our commitment to continue making our contribution to combating racism beyond our borders through disinterested and voluntary cooperation and by sacrificing the needs of our volunteers, who have never taken issue with the skin colour or social status of a person anywhere in the world in order to lend a hand of international solidarity.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 66?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.